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Placing the Blame

Mr. Pearson's diatribe in *The Washington Post*, May 10, states that the Joint Chiefs of Staff, after the CIA's amateur invasion of Cuba, "leaked to the press" that it was no fault of theirs that "the plan" failed. What plan? The original one backed by the U. S. air and amphibious support, or that which resulted from the President's decision to use no American forces whatever?

Mr. Pearson also states that, subsequent to the alleged JCS "leaks," Secretary McNamara made it clear that the JCS had approved the plan. President Kennedy manfully accepted all responsibility for the failure; but in no press dispatch subsequent to the fiasco did Mr. Dulles or Mr. McNamara, who has absorbed JCS authority, shoulder the responsibility.

I know nothing but what the press reported as far as the CIA is concerned. But there has been repeatedly announced, by the Department of Defense, such actions as "tightening civilian control"; taking special measures to close all service "leaks"; silencing senior military officers from speaking the whole truth; using his Assistant Secretaries of Defense to formulate military strategy; requiring JCS review and recommendation on Department of Defense "studies" within unrealistic deadlines and otherwise finishing the job toboggan on which construction was started by Secretary Wilson.

How can the country be expected to develop a sound, limited war potential under the Administration's new and wise defense policy, when its military leadership is silenced, by-

passed, and downgraded on all sides? Young officers and men and the public must have respect for the services and service leaders, which is pretty hard to do in the face of Pearson's (and others') irresponsibility.

With their varied experience in innumerable amphibious operations, it is most improbable that a planned invasion of Cuba would be approved by such able and experienced leaders as the JCS: a plan that sent a cargo vessel forward, unprotected by an Air Force "umbrella" or naval vessels, to discharge its cargo of tanks, mines, artillery, ammunition, and explosives, as Pearson reports.

A few days following the ill-fated invasion, the press reported General Eisenhower as commenting that he doubted that the JCS had approved the plan as executed; and then went on to recall the British disastrous landing at Gallipoli in 1915, where cargo vessels were even rammed ashore instead of being unloaded by lighter, all under Turkish artillery fire, and without benefit of modern amphibious crafts (LSTs, LCI's, LCMs, etc.).

Since Drew Pearson is a past master at obtaining "leaks," I think it is his duty to produce and publish exactly what plan the JCS approved, if any. Surely this should not be too difficult for Pearson, a genius since evidently Fidel Castro was able to obtain a very well before the assault.

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